

June 8, 1999

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF ELBERT GILL IN CELEBRATION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 1999

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay a very special tribute to one of the truly outstanding individuals from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District, Mr. Elbert Gill. On Monday, May 31, 1999, Elbert Gill will retire from service as Chairman of the Ottawa County Board of Elections.

Elbert Gill has certainly been a valuable asset to the Ottawa County Board of Elections. Since joining the Board of Elections in March 1989, Mr. Gill has worked diligently to serve the voters of Ottawa County in every manner possible. Whether it is his generosity in taking the staff to meetings or assisting with trouble-shooting on election night, Elbert Gill has given unselfishly of his time and helped make Ottawa County one of the best Boards of Elections in the state of Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, Elbert Gill embodies the very spirit of American workmanship through his conscientious attention to detail. In his job as Chairman of the Ottawa County Board of Elections, Mr. Gill has epitomized the word that best describes him—service. Although he is retiring after ten years on the board, his hard work, commitment, and dedication to the citizens of Ottawa County will continue long into the future.

Mr. Speaker, it has often been said that America succeeds due to the remarkable accomplishments and contributions of her citizens. It is very evident that Elbert Gill has given freely of his time and energy to assist in the preservation of American ideals. Our electoral process is the backbone of our nation, and those individuals, like Elbert Gill, who work hard to make that system free and democratic are true American patriots.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would urge my colleagues to stand and join me in paying special tribute to Elbert Gill. On the occasion of his retirement as Chairman of the Ottawa County Board of Elections, we thank him for his service and we wish him all the best in the future.

**TRIBUTE TO JUSTICE FOR
HOMICIDE VICTIMS**

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 1999

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Justice for Homicide Victims. The Board of Directors of the California Center for Family Survivors of Homicide, which includes its action arm, Justice for Homicide Victims has been a constant advocate for victims rights.

Today, we honor those who make it possible to help create a working environment with legislators so victims and their survivors

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

may attain equal rights. Marcella Leach, Executive Director of JHV, is one of the many dedicated individuals who help to make the public and legislators alike aware of the need for victims rights.

Justice for Homicide Victims was founded in 1984 by Ellen Griffin Dunne. The first goal of JHV was to establish a public perception that those who commit serious or malicious crimes should be punished accordingly.

JHV has been working tirelessly to effect legislative change. As a result, JHV helped implement a newly passed Victims Bill of Rights. In addition to support services through their hotline and at murder trials, JHV cooperates with the District Attorney's office on a regular basis which results in positive relationship and spreads JHV's goals and objectives.

JHV has worked for many years to educate and inform legislators on many aspects of the law. This year, JHV was honored to be the most organization for the Governor's Crime Summit and their efforts helped in the passage of legislation that was previously thought to be unattainable.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, please join me in celebrating the success of the California Center for Family Survivors of Homicide and Justice for Homicide Victims.

**LEGISLATION HONORING FALLEN
FIREFIGHTERS**

HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 1999

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution honoring firefighters throughout our nation that have died in the line of duty. It is appropriate that the Congress pay its respect to these individuals.

Just last week, the District of Columbia lost two brave and dedicated public servants. Firefighter Anthony Phillips died while fighting a fire at a DC town house. Firefighter Louis Matthews died days later from burns sustained while fighting the same blaze.

There are over 1.1 million firefighters on active duty everyday in the United States, and over the last 10 years, we have lost 1,109 of these courageous individuals to circumstances associated with doing their job.

Almost a month ago, the National Fire Protection Agency announced that 91 firefighters died in the line of duty during the year 1998. That is the lowest number of deaths in the last 10 years, and one of the lowest totals on record. While we are pleased to see the number of deaths decrease, clearly all Americans look forward to the day when we don't lose a single firefighter.

These brave individuals, many of whom serve as volunteers without compensation, risk their lives daily to insure that we can exit safely from our homes when they catch fire and provide life-saving care when we are injured in an accident. It is for these reasons that we honor these courageous individuals.

I trust my colleagues will join me in paying tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, both in the District I serve, and all across the nation.

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IN HONOR OF THE LATE STAFF
SERGEANT ALVIN W. PLASTER

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 1999

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize a man who exemplified courage and determination, Staff Sergeant Alvin W. Plaster. Tragically, Alvin Plaster died in 1996 after a long battle with a grave illness. While family and friends remember the truly exceptional life of Staff Sergeant Alvin W. Plaster, I, too, would like to pay tribute to this remarkable man.

Persistence and dedication displayed on the part of Alvin Plaster is what got him into the Army. Failing the physical examination twice, he convinced an Army physician to bend the rules slightly and let him enlist. From 1942 to 1945, Alvin Plaster was Staff Sergeant in the Quartermaster Corps. He served with integrity, enthusiasm, and most of all, pride.

Individuals such as Alvin Plaster, who contribute selflessly, are a rare breed. Though his family and friends no doubt mourn his absence, they have all gained immensely through knowing Alvin W. Plaster.

**CHILD SAFETY AND YOUTH
VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACT**

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 1999

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, today, the House Judiciary Committee will introduce legislation designed to help fight the scourge of violence among young people. Included in this bill is a proposal I authored with my colleague ROD BLAGOJEVICH of Illinois.

Our plan, HR 1717, known as the Violent Youth Offender Accountability Act, will prohibit violent juvenile felons from ever purchasing a firearm. Under current law, many states permit juveniles who have been convicted of violent felonies to have their criminal records expunged upon reaching age 18. As a result, it is perfectly legal for a juvenile with a record as a violent felon to legally purchase a deadly weapon. Mr. Speaker, this is wrong.

As many of my colleagues know, I spent nearly a dozen years as a criminal trial court judge and gang murder prosecutor. Some of the most serious crimes I have seen were committed by juveniles. We need to ensure that our streets are kept safe, and that young people learn how serious committing a violent crime can be. One of the surest ways to meet this goal is by keeping firearms out of the hands of serious criminals of any age.

We must also take steps to ensure that the law applies equally to all Americans. The Juvenile Justice bill includes a key provision of our bill which will apply the same standard to juveniles as to adults who have committed serious felonies. Crimes that are considered "serious violent felonies" and would disqualify an adult from legally purchasing a firearm must also apply to juveniles. Under current federal